

Arden Civic Committee Meeting – 9 June 2004

Present: Lou Bean (Emeritus), Sue Rothrock, Ken Sutton, Jacqi Tanzer and Danny Schweers, Secretary. Also present was Bev Barnett, Chair of the Sherwood Forest Restoration Subcommittee. Absent: Deborah Kenney and Rick Grier-Reynolds.

Sue Rothrock called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

SHERWOOD FOREST RESTORATION: Sue has received an e-mail from Bellevue State Park about possible volunteers to remove invasives and will follow up on that. Other than that, no one has responded to the request for volunteers.

Bev Barnett wondered about how best to set up workshops for the people outside of Arden who live close to Sherwood Forest. Sue suggested starting with a letter of introduction setting out the history of the forest, our recent acquisition of five acres, and our forest management philosophy. As well, we could ask Sherwood's neighbors to refrain from mowing the forest or dumping their trash in the forest. Bev liked that idea, handing out the letter door-to-door.

Bev will feed Danny info to put on TheArdens.com website, especially the 1978 Stewardship Plan developed by the Community Planning Committee, so our neighbors can see what we hope to do.

FENCES: Bev has looked at fences to put along the forest edge and prefers recycled plastic posts and rails. One option is to start with posts but use bamboo for rails. Can consider using shorter, two-rail posts only six feet tall. These posts could be anchored to stakes in a way similar to method used by the new path posts. Initial cost estimate is \$33,000 for fencing materials only, to go around unfenced parts of Sherwood Forest, 225 posts in all plus rails. There is no budget for this at the moment, so applying for a grant may be the way to go. That should not stop us from doing a little fencing now. Bev proposes getting a few pieces of the recycled plastic fencing to give it a try. This is approved by the committee.

INVASIVE SPECIES: Alton Dahl plans to work two days a week. Alton and Bev have already worked on clearing multiflora rose. (At this point, Bev showed off her poison ivy rash.)

TRAILS: Have a preliminary loop design. Bev is confident we can get funds for wetland boardwalk.

REFORESTATION is a matter of protecting what comes up naturally.

REMOVING INVASIVES ALONG MARSH ROAD: DelDOT can help with funds but needs Village request. When we do make our request, it will be good to make our pitch to include "Enhance Delaware Highways" and "Livable Delaware" -- two programs already underway in the state.

MISCOMMUNICATION: A leaseholder, thinking he was authorized to do so, sent e-mail to State Representative Wayne Smith and State Senator Kathy Cloutier about restoration of Sherwood Forest, asking for funds, nothing the Civic Committee had authorized. Issue has been clarified, that nothing can be done without authorization of the Civic Committee, the members of which are the elected officials of the Village. Ken suggested that we contact Smith and Cloutier. Elaine Schmerling of Ardentown is reported to have said that the state is doing an inventory of its forests. Sue noted that our forest policy has changed over the decades, that now what falls is left in place, which may change how the forest is regarded by the state in terms of fire hazards.

NEXT TOWN MEETING: Avery Task Force will ask for a motion to incorporate new five acres into village. Sense of the committee is that nothing in the request should mention the previous owner and that any funding requests should be for the entire forest, not just the five acres, which we want to regard as a whole, not as separate pieces.

SEWER WORK: Sue spent three hours recently with Joseph Hardy & Sons, a subcontractor for the County, whose employees were repairing personholes along Sherwood Road. Sue got them to sign a permission form and got a \$10 check. They are repairing cracks which allow silt to enter the sewer system.

BEER GARDEN: Club has fixed drainage somewhat but not to the satisfaction of the committee members who have seen the work. There is still no proper path to the Memorial Garden from Gild Hall.

PATH SIGN POSTS: Ken marked paths with spray paint and again two weeks later, to show Dave Burslem where to erect the sign posts. Sue went with Dave as he put them in, careful to place them away from macadam and trees. The finished sign posts - 4x4 redwood with the path's name cut into the wood - have gotten rave reviews.

SUNSET PATH: The path sign post is up, but it is still four feet inside our r.o.w. Patros Path was missed in the posting. The village receives \$951 annually for

paths, not nearly enough to repair Patros Path, which is estimated to cost \$3,500 to repair, to get the stones above the grass, water and mud, to give them a sure foundation so they do not keep sinking under.

ISLAND AT MILLER AND WALNUT: Weeds have been sprayed. A guerilla group has been planting pachysandra. Committee discussed merits of waiting to plant in September, when plants are more likely to survive. That might be a good time, also, to recruit students who need community service hours.

RECYCLING: There is draft legislation mandating recycling in Delaware. This change would not affect us financially but would in other ways. A small change would be the replacement of our red buckets with blue buckets. Big change would be that items would have to be separated. This, the committee believes, will discourage people from recycling. Under the present system, leaseholder can put glass, cans and plastic all in one bucket.

R.O.W. ENCROACHMENTS: There are lots of problems with people putting rocks and plants up to the edge of their property. Biggest problem is at Hillside and Harvey Roads, for people driving west on Hillside trying to pull out onto Harvey Road: they cannot see the on-coming traffic without pulling out into it. Then they can see it just fine.

[Section 1 of Ordinance 11 reads in part: It shall be the responsibility of each leaseholder to refrain from introducing anything that will interfere with rights-of-way adjacent to their leasehold. The criteria for maintaining rights-of-way are that they be kept clear enough to allow pedestrians to step off the road surface to make way for vehicular traffic, to allow two wheels off parking except where such parking is specifically prohibited, and to allow for safe visibility of pedestrians and vehicles.]

POSSIBLE ADDITION TO FOREST POLICY: A policy governing trees on leaseholds next to the forest edge has been suggested to the Civic Committee. This policy would address issues such as a leaseholder who wants to cut down large trees next to the forest edge in order to add to their house, a change that would impact the forest. Committee members discussed role of Civic Committee as enforcers of policies affecting leaseholders and policies affecting our forests. Ken remembered the village in 1963 as a place much more open and full of sunlight than now. After much discussion, committee agreed to send a letter to Trustees saying we will not intervene on questions concerning trees on leaseholds but will care for forest next to leaseholds where work on leaseholds might affect it.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. with talk of winged euonymus (a.k.a. dwarf burning bush, cork bush, compacta). The next meeting will be Wednesday, June 14, at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Danny N. Schweers
Secretary, Village of Arden